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SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/ANP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [FM](#)
SUBJECT: BURIAL AND MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR SGT YOUNVERT LONEY
DEMONSTRATE CLOSE US-FSM TIES

11. (U) On September 5, FSM citizen and U.S. Army Sergeant (Sgt) Youvert Loney, a 28-year-old soldier assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, died of wounds suffered after an attack by enemy forces in Abad, Afghanistan. Sgt Loney's spouse and two children reside in Fort Carson, Colorado, but Sgt Loney's father, as the authorized person to direct disposition, opted to bring the remains back to Pohnpei for burial. The US Army Casualty Office in Honolulu contacted post and requested assistance.

12. (U) In the past five years, four other Micronesian members of the US military died while on active duty and were brought home for burial. Military funerals in the Federated States of Micronesia present a special challenge as there are no hearses, funeral homes, or public cemeteries in the country. Local custom dictates that the deceased be buried outside the family home or in a private cemetery. Ambassador Hughes met with Sgt Loney's father, Mr. Joakim Loney, at the Embassy on September 7, officially informed him of the death of his son, and expressed her condolences.

13. (SBU) Nine soldiers (SSgt Peter E. Iverson, Sgt Kyle C. O'Leary, Sgt Donald Jeik, Sgt Charles A. Jobst IV, Cpl Arthur F. Fread, Cpl Steven H. Matson, Spc Jeremy O. Cook, Pv2 Bryan J. Whittier, and Pv2 Paul P. Hinkley) from Schofield Barracks in Honolulu arrived in Pohnpei on September 17 to serve as the U.S. Military Honor Guard. The team was led by SFC Michael Crisolo. The team worked with the Embassy on arrangements for the memorial and burial services. Practice runs were conducted at the airport, the church and the burial site.

14. (SBU) SGT Loney's remains arrived in Pohnpei on September 19 via a U.S. military C-17 aircraft. Special Escort Sgt Herbert Sneed, also a soldier of Micronesian descent and a cousin of Sgt Loney, accompanied the casket. Charge' d' Affaires William Douglass, FSM Assistant Secretary of American and European Affairs Gabriel Ayin, and U.S. Brigadier General Alexander I. Kozlov met the plane on the tarmac. About one hundred family members and friends also witnessed the plane's arrival. The Honor Guard carried the flag-draped casket into the airport's VIP departure lounge for the immediate family's private viewing. Due to Sgt Loney's facial injuries both the memorial and burial services were closed casket.

15. (U) The Embassy's Suburban SUV acted as hearse and carried Sgt Loney's remains in a motorcade procession that included Charge' Douglass, General Kozlov, immediate family members, police escort, and mourners to the Kepinle Protestant Church in Kolonia for a memorial service. Attendees included FSM Vice President Alik Alik, FSM Congress Speaker Isaac Figir, members of the FSM Congress, and Pohnpei State Governor John Ehsa.

Charge' Douglass, FSM Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs Jane Chigiya and Brigadier General Kozlov were among those who provided remarks. Brigadier General Kozlov presented Sgt Loney's awards to his wife Flora and his father. In actions arising from his death in battle, Sgt Loney received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Sgt Loney's other awards included an Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, Iraq Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. The motorcade reformed at the conclusion of the service and accompanied the casket to the Loney family home in Palikir, Sokehs municipality.

¶16. (U) SGT Loney was laid to rest next to his family's home on Sunday, September 20. He was buried with full military honors, including a seven-gun salute and the playing of taps by the Schofield Barracks Honor Team. Brigadier General Kozlov presented the U.S. flag that had draped the casket to Sgt Loney's wife and another flag to his father. About three hundred friends and family members attended the burial.

CONCLUSION:

¶17. (U) Title III of the Compact of Free Association obligates the United States to defend the FSM and allows FSM citizens to join the U.S. Armed Forces on a volunteer basis. Post has never seen any anger directed at the US government following combat deaths, not by the FSM Government nor by the soldiers' family members. Instead, Micronesians show a deep appreciation for the honor and respect provided to their deceased citizens. During the church service, Lay Minister Dakio Loney, Sgt Loney's uncle, said, "I extend my sincere appreciation to the President of the United States for sending the body of Youvert Loney back to his

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family."

¶18. (U) Post would like to express its sincere appreciation to the members of the U.S. Army who participated in the ceremonies.

Brigadier General Alexander I. Kozlov, Casualty Assistance Officers SFC Michael Crisolo and SFC Rudy Guerra, Sgt Herbert Sneed, and the Schofield Barracks Honor Team were attentive and respectful to the family at all times. Their professionalism and precision while carrying out their duties was truly exemplary.

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